



The President's Daily Brief

13 November 1971



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

An article in a Soviet journal strongly endorses President Nixon's visit to the USSR. (Page 1)

Japan is now determined to make a real effort to open official contacts with Peking but there is uncertainty over how to proceed. (Page 2)

The North Vietnamese are continuing to strengthen their forces in northern Laos in preparation for their dry season offensive. (Page 3)

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USSR-US-SALT

An article in a Soviet journal gives a strong endorsement to President Nixon's visit to the USSR. Yury Arbatov, the Kremlin's leading expert on American affairs, writing in the October issue of his USA Institute's journal, described the trip as a "positive act" that will help reduce tensions in US-Soviet relations and will promote the success of SALT. The article was approved for publication on 12 October--the day of the joint announcement of the trip.

One passage touches on the impact of defense spending on domestic priorities. Arbatov professes that broad circles in the US have come to believe that it is impossible for even a country as wealthy as the US to provide "guns and butter" at the same time. With a GNP less than half that of the US and with expenditures on arms almost as great, Arbatov's implied message for Soviet readers rings fairly clear: "If they can't do it, how can we?"

Relaxed and conciliatory in tone, the article seems to be an attempt to explain and defend the trip against the background of long-standing tensions in the USSR's relations with the US. The Soviet readership of the journal, largely upper- and middle-level bureaucrats, is being told that, while the regime's acceptance of the presidential visit does not entail sacrifices of essential positions, it markedly enhances possibilities for increased cooperation in various areas from arms control to trade.

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JAPAN

The Japanese, in the wake of the UN vote, are now determined to make a real effort to open official contacts with Peking. Prime Minister Sato has repeatedly acknowledged that Japan must normalize relations, but there are sharp differences within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the Foreign Ministry about how to proceed. The Japanese dilemma is compounded by the fact that Peking has thus far given no public indication of a willingness to talk.

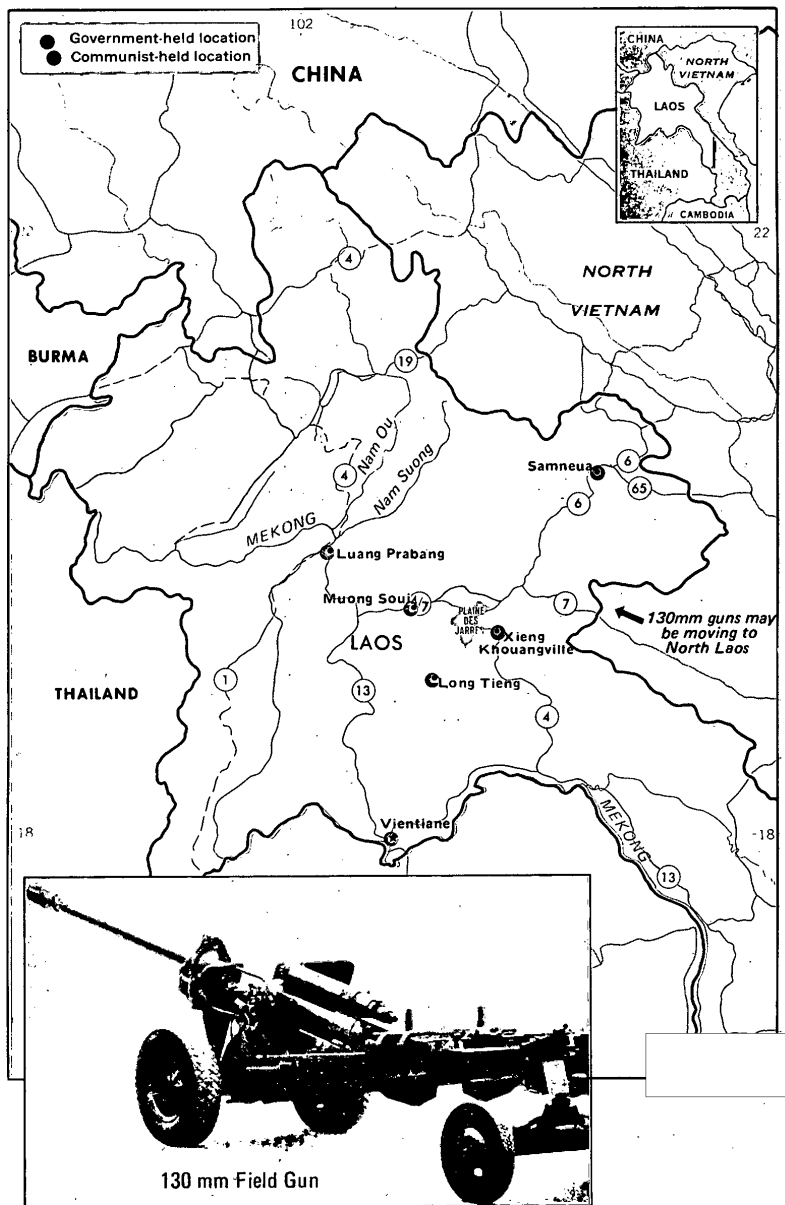
Tokyo believes it is no longer politically acceptable merely to live with rebuffs from Peking. The Foreign Ministry's top China expert told a US official earlier this week that both Sato and Foreign Minister Fukuda still hope to be able to open negotiations with Peking without preconditions. He is convinced, however, that talks are impossible unless Tokyo explicitly acknowledges Peking as the sole legitimate government of China, and Taiwan as an integral part of the Peoples Republic.

There is also a growing willingness on the part of some senior Liberal Democrats to explore the possibility of concessions in order to get talks going.

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[redacted] the prime minister in public has steadfastly refused to consider abrogation.

Feelers such as this are likely to continue over the next few months. Sato is likely to move cautiously and to remain reluctant to commit his government publicly to any major change in China policy until after President Nixon's trip to Peking.



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LAOS

The North Vietnamese are continuing to strengthen their forces in northern Laos in preparation for their dry season offensive. According to intercepts, 16 130-mm. artillery pieces and about 1,300 rounds of 130-mm. ammunition were to be sent from North Vietnam between 1 and 10 November.

This will be the first time the Communists have deployed this weapon to northern Laos. Several 122-mm. weapons were deployed before the dry season in 1970. The 130-mm. has a range of approximately 16 miles, several miles beyond that of the 122-mm. and that of the government's largest gun. Like the 122-mm., however, it is vulnerable to air strikes.

Other messages indicate that a total of about 4,300 North Vietnamese troops are now on their way to the Plaine des Jarres area. One intercept suggested plans for the movement of additional troops.

Some of the men en route may be fillers for units already near the Plaine. Other infiltrating groups have been identified as elements of the 312th Division. Two of the division's three regiments deployed to north Laos earlier this year.

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NOTE

Pakistan: On several occasions, US and UN officials in East Pakistan have observed Pakistani troops and police riding in vehicles with UN insignia. Vehicles used in the UN relief effort are clearly marked to prevent attacks by the guerrillas. Continued use by the security forces of UN-marked vehicles will invite Mukti Bahini attacks on authentic relief efforts.

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